THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) The Department has no reports that manufacturers of Biris holding Central Excise licences have shifted their manufacturing units from their declared premises to other places including residential premises. However, for levy of Central Excise duty, it is immaterial whether goods are being manufactured in a premises located in a residential area or in a premises located in an industrial area. Hence shifting of a factory to domestic premises cannot result in avoidance of payment of Central Excise duty.

(b) Does not arise in view of part (a) above.

Detention of Export Consignments by US Food and Drug Administration

[English]

*533. SHRI RABI RAY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has detained a large number of export consignments shipped from India containing mainly food items at various ports in the United States during February and March, 1991;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government have identified the companies involved in this case; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by the Union Government to keep the quality of Indian export items to the international standard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (d) A statement is attached.

STATEMENT

During February and March, 1991, 188 export consignments shipped from India, mainly food items, were detained at various ports in the United States.

The main items detained included rice (for insect and rodent filth), frozen shrimp and other fish (for decomposition and infestation with salmonella), brassware and metalware (for lead content), spices (for animal and insect filth), essences (for omitting mandatory labelling) and a few cases of psyllium husk (for insect filth).

The list of companies involved has been published by the US Food and Drug Administration. Detention of these consignments at US ports does not mean that the consignments are rejected. Detention means that the consignments are not cleared automatically but only after testing, and if need be, after reconditioning.

Most of the detained consignment of food products were within the purview of compulsory export inspection by Export Inspection Agency, the Directorate of Marketing and Inspection or Directorate of Fruits and Vegetables Preservation. In some cases exporters have been authorised to give certificates under In Process Quality Control (IPQC) scheme. If the detained consignments are finally rejected, action can be taken against the erring officials of the concerned inspection agency (if they had certified the consignment) or against the exporting firm. However, simultaneously effort is being made to

minimize infestation/contamination at the source. Accordingly, the list of consignments detained at US ports and the reasons for detention were conveyed to the concerned trade associations, export promotion councils and government agencies so that the exporters could be sensitized to the need to upgrade the quality of export consignments for meeting the requirements of US Government in respect of imports into the US.

The Marine Products Export Development Authority is discussing with the industry the desirability of entering into a memorandum of understanding with the USFDA in respect of agencies which would be mutually acceptable for certifying the quality of marine products. The Basic Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals and Cosmetics Export Promotion Council has discussed with the industry measures to upgrade storage facilities in respect of psyllium husk in order to minimize occurrence of insect filth etc. The Spices Board held a meeting with major exporters, including those whose consignments were detained, to work out measures for avoiding detentions. The Agricultural Products Export Development Authority has been asked to take similar action.

Establishment of Ordinance Factory in Kerala

*534. SHRI A. CHARLES : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government of Kerala has requested the Union Government to establish an Ordnance Factory in Kerala;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the decision taken by the Union Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR) : (a) and (b) In January 1988, the Chief Minister of Kerala had requested to set up in Cannanore District of Kerala a Defence Production Unit within the Ordnance Factories Organisation, to manufacture packages, inclusive of inner liners and containers and outer casings.

(c) The policy of the Government is that for such low technology and low value added items for which capacity exists in civil sector, no new capacity be created in Ordnance factories.

Free Legal Aid to Poor

*535. SHRIMATI MAHENDRA KUMARI
SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN

Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of persons benefitted by Free Legal Aid Scheme during 1990-91 and 1991-92 till date, Statewise;

(b) whether free legal aid is provided to the poor by all the courts;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps proposed to be taken by the Union Government to widen the scope of the scheme for free legal aid to the poor?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI K. VIJAYA BHASKARA REDDY) : (a) As per information available, about 1.80 lakh persons and 0.18 lakh persons have benefitted through Legal Aid Schemes during